

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – JOBS, ECONOMY AND
TRANSPORT**

5 August 2014

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**PROPOSED RECIPROCAL WORK PLACEMENT WITH TOYOTA
CITY**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek Cabinet approval for a nominated officer to undertake a reciprocal visit to Toyota City Council to complete a six week work placement.

(2) **Information and Analysis** During 2013, and as part of the commemoration of the 15th year of the formal twinning agreement between Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council, South Derbyshire District Council and Toyota City, the partners hosted a colleague from Toyota City Council for a six week work placement.

Mr Takashi Hirata undertook work which supported the anniversary programme, including developing improved promotional links between Derbyshire and Toyota City. Mr Hirata also assisted in preparing the successful delegation to Toyota Industry Festa in September 2013 and subsequent civic exchanges that led to the signing of the new Twinning Agreement in November 2013.

As part of the anniversary programme, partners discussed the potential for a colleague from Derbyshire to reciprocate the work placement initiative during 2014. Since this time, Toyota City Council has further committed to the exchange programme and collectively, the three local authority partners are hosting Mr Hirata for 12 months between May 2014 and May 2015. In addition, a Toyota City colleague, Yasuhiro Suzuka, is visiting Derbyshire from mid-July for a six week period.

Since the time of the last update to Cabinet on 11 February 2014, a Twinning Development Team has been established to better co-ordinate activity between the three Derbyshire local authority partners. The focus of the Team has been to investigate and develop the potential initiatives proposed

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following the Industry Festa delegation and respond to Mayor Ota's three point plan to take forward shared work around Industry, Tourism and Environment.

Toyota City Council has proposed that an employee from one of the Derbyshire local authorities undertakes a six week work placement in Japan as part of the reciprocal arrangements. It is proposed that any such visit should coincide with other activity to gain maximum benefit from the investment. Currently, two such opportunities exist:

- To align the officer's visit to coincide with this year's Toyota Industry Festa during September 2014; this would be in line with last year's arrangement.
- To align the six week placement with a United Nation's conference being hosted by Toyota City in the early part of 2015 around 'Sustainable Development'.

There are clear benefits to Derbyshire in either proposal. The Industry Festa was supported by several officers last year and was successful in building up trade links and promoting the county to the world as place to visit and invest. A large amount of work is already in place and capable of being brought forward from last year (e.g. publicity and promotional material).

Alternatively, the UN conference on sustainable development represents a significant and strategic opportunity to learn and share experience and contribute to global agenda. It would provide a strong platform from which to market Derbyshire and the UK across the world and to highlight the work the Council is doing to create sustainable communities.

The three local authorities have received personal invites from Mayor Ota to attend the conference and there is an expectation that our previous commitment to support the reciprocal work placement will be honoured. However, within the context of current financial challenges, it is expected that only one of the options to visit Japan can be supported financially.

Irrespective of whichever option is agreed, the Twinning Development Team has developed a programme of potential work for the placement which would focus on one or more of the future initiatives highlighted in the previous Cabinet report including:

- Trade Missions – for discussion with the Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce and likely to focus on high quality consumer goods.
- A programme of work focusing on existing export links and businesses looking to break into the Japanese market; e.g. capitalising on the 'Made in Derbyshire' programme which is being developed for 2015.

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- “Ecoful Town” Demonstrator project – scope out the feasibility for delivering a similar project in Derbyshire potentially within the National Forest.
- Tourism Partnership – building upon the launch of the Japanese language tourism website, establish a partnership protocol focusing on supporting the visitor economy and promoting increased tourism traffic between Derbyshire and Japan.
- Motor City regeneration – review the potential of forming a tripartite regeneration link between Derbyshire, Toyota City and Detroit (twinning with Toyota) to share best practice in the advancement of manufacturing and advanced engineering (key growth sector).

(3) **Financial Considerations** Should the proposed six week placement be approved for a Derbyshire County Council employee, funding will be met from the existing Twinning budget within the Economic and Regeneration. If the agreed placement is not a County Council employee, costs will be met by the employing authority.

(4) **Human Resources Considerations** The Twinning Development Team is currently seeking expressions of interest from officers across the three authorities to take part in the six week placement; the expressions of interest are being requested without prejudice and subject to Cabinet approval being forthcoming.

It is anticipated that the officer is selected from one of the three local authorities and the joint Team will prepare an agreed project brief prior to departure.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(4) **Key Decision** No.

(5) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(6) **Background Papers** Held by the Economic Regeneration Service in the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Frank Horsley, extension 38348.

(7) **OFFICER’S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member:

7.1 Notes the proposal forms part of the on-going Twinning Arrangement with Toyota City and approves the proposed six week work placement to Toyota City before the end of March 2015.

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- 7.2 Agrees for the Twinning Development Team to discuss with Toyota City which of the two options presents the best value in terms of maximising the return for Derbyshire regarding profile, exposure and opportunity for marketing the County.
- 7.3 Requests the Twinning Development Team undertakes an exercise to secure and evaluate expressions of interest from officers within the three local authorities and identify an appropriate officer to undertake the work placement, alongside developing clear project objectives for the placement, to be agreed by senior officers of the three partner authorities.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment